

Kentucky Division of Forestry Employees Attend Interagency Wildland Fire Training Academy

The week-long academy offered 23 training courses ranging from basic wildland firefighting skills and air operations to courses for fireline supervisors and incident commanders. KDF's wildland firefighters, also known as Forest Ranger-Technicians and Foresters, are professionally trained to National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards. Although newly hired employees receive basic training in firefighting operations with particular emphasis for safety and survival, firefighting techniques, fire behavior, weather, and use and care of firefighting equipment, the academy offers KDF's firefighters the opportunity to advance their skills through field exercises, lectures, and training from instructors with many years of wildland fire experience.

The academy also operates under the Incident Command System promoted by NWCG for the purpose of simulating the operational organization of a wildland fire response incident. This allows firefighters to become familiar with ICS and assist them with future deployments.

"The academy allows our firefighters to work and train with other agencies in an effort to make wildland fire response efforts safer and more efficient," said Bernie Andersen, Fire Management Chief for the Kentucky Division of Forestry. "We send as many students and instructors as possible to the academy each year."

The Tennessee-Kentucky Wildland Fire Academy is held each year to promote opportunities for all government agencies and other organizations to build skills and knowledge of wildland and prescribed fire that meets the National NWCG standards. Beginning this year, the academy will donate \$250 annually to three memorial foundations: the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the Tennessee Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Kentucky Fallen Firefighters Foundation.